CHAPTER VII

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES WHILE OUT OF POWER
Nabakrushna Choudhry had never harboured any objective for holding any political power, but he accepted the post of chief minister of Orissa. It was primarily due to his political responsibility and as a congressman his decision to abide by the advice of the congress high command at the centre. As an administrator, he was not of great success. The fact that he did not aspire for power, rather power sought him. He was one of the extra-ordinary people with great vision and dynamism and was one among the few Odias, who had come out of the luxury and dedicated his entire life for the reconstruction of the state and for the cause of its poor people. Power and fame did not mean much for him, as his motto of life concentrated around the words ‘service’. His basic principle of life was of ‘simple living and high thinking’. Like Gandhiji, Nabakrushna Choudhury pleaded for simple living and restricting acquisitive materialism in society.

Just like Gandhiji, Nabakrushna Choudhury as the leader of the people always worried about the welfare and development of the people. He felt that people’s development is the means in the way of achieving the goal of the nation’s development. Nabakrushna Choudhury as a leader of the common mass completely identified himself with them, who also took them as his own kith and kin. Being a true lover of mankind, he had a soft corner and feeling for the poor and weaker sections of people. To him a person is best known for his/her services and action rather than his appearance and power (Mohanty 1994).
Nabakrushna Choudhury expressed his displeasure when someone called him as the ex-chief minister of the state. It hurt him a lot and with much agony he exclaimed, “Have not I have any recognition/name except that” (Maharana 2010). He was not only famous for his political career but also for his humanity, integrity and transparency in public life. Throughout his life, Nabakrushna Choudhury had struggled against corruption and worked for the wellbeing of the distressed and miserable section of the people (http://Orissa.gov.in).

Though, Nabakrushna Choudhury was not very successful as a politician and an administrator, yet no body can deny his contributions towards the state through some of his novel programmes and policies. He was being described as a very progressive chief minister, who could visualize, far ahead of his time. The age-old zamindary system was ultimately abolished. The farmers became free from the exploitation of the zamindars and able to get ownership right on their land. Nabakrushna Choudhury’s achievement as the revenue minister speaks of his vision and mission. His concern for the welfare of the people made Anchal Shasan a reality which was the precursor to the community development programme, launched in Orissa on the eve of Gandhi Jayanti Day of 1952. He was one of the practical statesman. Mere formulation of rules and regulations and the appointment of officers did not mean much to him, as he used to visit the field for himself, where the policies were implemented in real practice (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabakrushna-Choudhury).

It was the true fact that Nabakrushna Choudhury did not seek power but power sought him and put him in a vantage position. The administrative deficiencies during
his tenure from 1952-1956, gave ample opportunity to his opponents to raise a storm against him. The first five year plan could not work in Orissa due to severe alterations of the Hirakud Dam project, for which the power generation programme was pushed back by five years. Crores of rupees lapsed every year, because, the department did not work up to mark. About sixty percent of minor irrigation work planned to have completed, actually did not happen and seventy percent (70%) of the relief grant could not be spent in the years of floods. The administration was left in the hands of the officers while the minister engaged themselves in their own matters of narrow personal interest. As the chief minister, Nabakrushna Choudhury’s real interest for instance, was in Bhoodan movement and Ashram schools for adivasis. A large amount was spent on Bhoodan and also on Angul ashram run by Malati Choudhury (wife of Nabakrushna Choudhury) were subjects of open public criticism (Ghosh 1991: 79).

In 1950, a number of political leaders of congress, particularly belonging to Dr Harekrushna Mahatab clique, represented that unless the leadership of Nabakrushna Choudhury was changed, there would be no possibility of congress winning the election in 1957 (Jena and Baral 1988: 144). But Jawaharlal Nehru, the then prime minister of India and one of the true friend and well-wisher of Nabakrushna Choudhury, still had high hopes on him and upon his policies and programmes. Thus as a matter of fact, he tried his best to persuade him again and again, not to resign from power. Apart from persuading him directly, he also wrote a series of letters to Malati Choudhury requesting her to persuade her husband (Nabakrushna Choudhury) not to get frustrated and resign. But, as Nabakrushna Choudhury was very much adamant and being disgusted by the groupism and crude
politicking of Mahatab, resigned from office of chief-ministership and also from the congress on October 18, 1956 and left for his Angul ashram on foot, accompanied by his wife, Malati Choudhury, both carrying their personal belongings on their shoulder to join the sorvodaya movement and never returned to politics (Ghosh 1991 86-87)

Thus, he renounced the party-based politics, the moment he relinquished the post of chief-ministership but politics (party based) did not leave him till last. He never hesitates to congratulate, praise and appreciate those persons who were adorned with dedication and sincerity irrespective of his affiliation to any party or organization in his special trait and character throughout his life. He always came to the forefront in order to oppose and protest against unjust and discrimination perpetrated at anywhere in India as well as Orissa till his last (Nayak 2001 278)

FROM POWER TO COMMON MAN (NABAKRUSHNA CHOWDHURY)

Nabakrushna Chouduury after relinquishing the chief-ministership, not only interested to return to Bhoodan movement, but also desired to stay with the most under-developed regions of Orissa. Long before, Malati Choudhury, the wife of Nabakrushna Choudhury was actively associated with the welfare of the suppressed and exploited section of people. For that purpose, ‘Nabajivan Mandal’, a self-help organization was established by Malati Choudhury with the support of his husband Nabakrushna Choudhury. At the beginning, the centre was at Koraput but later on it was shifted to Angul. Gradually, those activists of ‘Nabajivan Mandal’ were spread in other parts of Orissa. Beforehand, ‘Baji Rout Chhatrabas’, (a hostel named after the young boatman who refused to ferry the British police to other side of the river
Brahmani to suppress the public who rose against the ruler of Dhenkanal, in Orissa which was a noble institution of that time was established by Malati Choudhury with the support of her husband Nabakrushna Choudhury Later on, ‘Uttar Maulik Bidyalaya’ came into existence at Chamtimunda in Angul. All these institutions played key role in building the future of the nation, as well as, providing education along with real physical, mental and character building of the student (Nayak 2001).

Nabakrushna Choudhury, after his retirement from the politics, mostly worked with his wife Malati Choudhury, who was one of the well-known freedom fighter, as well as, the social activists of those times. He along with his wife decided to shift to remote areas of the state to work for the people, who really needed it for their all-round development (Maharana 2010). That Ashram, the ‘Baji Rout Chhatrabas’ (Baji Rout Boys Hostel) has all along been instrumental in bringing about political and social awareness among the people, who have been subjected to all kinds of exploitation, including the government indifferences.

As Nabakrushna Choudhury’s main intention for resignation was to join Vinoba Bhave’s Bhoodan movement and Sarvodaya movement as well as also to work side by side with Jaya Prakash Narayana, one of the topmost political leader and freedom fighters of that time. In the year 1975, Sri Nabakrushna Choudhury participated in the ‘Sampurna Kranti Andolana’ (Total Revolution) under the leadership of Sri Jayaparaksh Narayan. Total Revolution stands for bringing about revolutionary change in all aspects of the life, starting from individual to society. There are four aspects of ‘Total Revolution’, such as struggle, construction, propaganda, and organization. As a consequence of this movement, a new society will be emerged,
where there will exist equality irrespective of caste, creed and colour. In that society, everyone lead a prosperous life, the gap between the rich and poor should be reduced and also there was no place for exploitation.

**BHOODAN MOVEMENT & NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY**

The Bhoodan movement initiated by Acharya Vinoba Bhave, a trusted follower of Mahatma Gandhi, was launched in the country in the early fifties of the last century. The movement was an attempt towards land reform and it intended to solve the land-related problems in the country, in a novel way, by making land available to the most sub-nudged and disadvantaged class of Indian society, the landless and the poor and the equitable distribution of land by voluntary donations. The movement, driving its inspiration from Gandhian philosophy and techniques, created a sensation in Indian society for a few years by making mass appeal and giving rise to the hope of solving the age-old land-related problem by adopting miraculous methods and others started their historic ‘pad-yatra’ (walking on foot) from Bari-Ramachandrapur for collecting land for the landless. The pad-yatra, though, initially not intended for the purpose of ‘Bhoodan’ in the course of its progress, collected land gifts. The first meeting held at Bari-Ramachandrapur, the first land gift was made by Harapnya Devi of the village. The pad-yatra continued for 4 months and 22 days and it passed through 8 districts of Orissa covering a distance of 1100 miles, yields a collection of 1626 acres of land from 233 donors. The second round of pad-yatra led by Gopabandhu Choudhury and Rama Devi, commenced on the Gandhi Jayanti day in 1952 and it ended on 10 December 1952. This pad-yatra which covered only a distance of 427 miles yielded a collection of 463 acres of land.
seven pair of bullocks and agricultural implements worth rupees 816. The movement was supported by the state government and to facilitate the donation of land to the movement and to provide for the distribution of such lands, the Orissa legislative assembly passed the Orissa Bhoodan Yagna Bill, in April, 1953. It received the assent of president of India on 26 July, 1953 and became Orissa Act XVI of 1953 (http://Orissa.govt.in/e-magazine/Orissa review/20).

The Bhoodan movement (Sarvodaya movement) had three important agendas, namely, Gramdan, Khadi and Village Industries and the Shanti Seva. The objective of the land donation campaign (Bhoodan) was to make available all the land in the world to the whole of mankind. This village donation movement was also spearheaded under the auspices of Serva Seva Sangh. The fundamental principal of this movement was to promote the all-round progress of the people in the villages. This movement aimed mainly for the economic development of the villagers.

On the matter of village donation, Vinoba said “village donation is a defense measure, if the country continues with the divides of rich-poor, landless-landlord, there will be mutual recrimination and confrontation and the country’s freedom will be in danger. But due to village donation, the disparity in the village will disappear and there will be an ambience of love and cooperation and the independence of the country undisturbed. On entering the land of Kalinga (Orissa), Vinoba observed “O, heroes of Kalinga, who transformed the torrid Asoka into “Non-violent Asoka”, you have now to achieve a transformation to bring about a land revolution (Deshpande 2001 62).
The Bhoodan movement got impetus in 1956, when Nabakrushna Choudhury resigned from chief-ministership and joined the movement. As a result, by the end of 1960, 1464 villages were gifted in “Gramdan” in the state, out of the total 4500 gramdans made in the entire country. Before his resignation, Nabakrushna Choudhury as a chief minister also had shown his interest towards this movement (Sarvodaya/ Bhoodan). As a result, many government employees, teachers, students were co-operating in the movement as the chief minister was closely associated himself in the Bhoodan movement, initiated by Vinoba Bhave. Not only Nabakrushna Choudhury, but also his entire family like Gopabandhu Choudhury, Rama Devi, Malati Choudhury etc were engaged themselves in the movement by joining hand with Vinoba Bhave (Nayak 2001).

Nabakrushna Choudhury was very much happy due to satisfactory success of ‘Bhoodan movement’ in Orissa from the period from 1952 to 1954. This is evident from the fact that out of the total 11,065 Gramdans made in the entire country by November, 1965, Orissa made a handsome contribution of 2807 Gramdans. To facilitate donations of land to the Bhoodan and Gramdan movement in the state and to provide for the distribution of such lands, the government of Orissa passed the Orissa Bhoodan and Gramdan Act in 1970. But despite legislative measures, the movement lost its momentum after the fourth five year plan (1969-74) period when the ceiling surplus provisions came into force.

Bhoodan movement however should not be judged in terms of its material achievement but from the fact that it represented one of the major attempts after independence to provide a peaceful solution to the basic problems of Indian society.
The Bhoodan-Gramdan movement as a whole had failed to gain enough land for the landless in the society by the silver Jubilee year of the movement. All it could obtain in Orissa by the end of December 1975 was a total of 12,75,428 acres out of which only 6,79,565 acres of land was distributed among 74,687 families in the state. In Orissa, Bhoodan movement gained a substantial momentum during the early 1950’s. But there was mistake in the distribution of land policies. Most of the Villages were gifted land during the time of movement, located mostly in tribal belts. These land patches were not suitable for cultivation and also found disputed possessions. However, the movement should not be judged in terms of its material achievement but from the fact that it represented one of the major attempts after independence to provide a peaceful solution of the basic problem of Indian society, the land problem, through voluntary action involving the masses.

TOTAL REVOLUTION OF JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

In 1974, Nabakrushna Choudhury joined hands with Jayaprakash Narayan in his ‘Sumpurna Kranti Andolano’ (Total Revolution). This ‘Total Revolution’ Movement aimed at bringing about a revolutionary change in all aspects of the life of both society and individual. The objective of this movement was not merely to change the government, but also to change the society and the individual. This was not something that could be achieved in a day or in a year or two. In order to achieve this, a struggle needed for a long time and at those same times to carry on the constructive and creative activities for all-round development of society as well as...
the individual of the society. This double process of struggle and construction was a necessity in order to achieve ‘Total Revolution’. There were four aspects of works for ‘Total Revolution’, such as struggle, construction, propaganda and organization. It should be the main plank of the revolution to turn the people’s and youth’s minds against such evils which were existed in the society such as dowry system, caste-distinctions, unsociability, communalism etc. and to work unitadely for social and cultural integration. ‘Total Revolution’ was the permanent revolution (www.mkgandhi.org/pnarayun/total-revolution.htm)

Jaya Prakash Narayana with whom, Nabakrushna Choudhury had joined in his ‘Total Revolution’, as his ideology matched with him. He (Jayaprakash Narayan) summed up the path of the ‘Total Revolution’ which he wanted to adopt in the following words -

My concept of “Total Revolution” can be summed up as follows “it would bring about a basic change in social, economic, political, educational and moral consciousness. As a consequence of the revolution, a new society will be formed, which would be free from any misrepresentation or misinterpretation. Every citizen of this nation has a prosperous life, the gap between the rich and the poor should be reduced and exploitation must end. Social evils should be eliminated and justice of economic transformation of harijans, tribal, agricultural labourers and the landless should be given specific attention. If this has to be achieved, then every one should identify oneself with the country and every heart should cry out that, it is an Indian and this feeling should also be reproduced in every action. The objectives of swarodaya, socialism, communism, etc. the same, though their approaches were
different ‘Total Revolution’, as I visualize it, will achieve that objective. Our objective is not just to eliminate the drawbacks of today’s rulers. Now we have an opportunity to set in motion a moral revolution and once it starts nobody can stop it. No, not even me, Jayaprakash Narayan.”

There were four pillars of Total Revolution such as:

1. The removal of unemployment
2. The removal of corruption
3. The prevention of price rise and
4. The Indianisation of education (Dua 2008 74-76)

**BAJI ROUT CHHATRAVAS AND NAVAJEEVAN MANDAL**

An institution was established on 11th May, 1946 in Angul by the couple, (Nabakrushna Choudhury and Malati Choudhury) where they put their ideas and way of life into practice. That institution was named ‘Baji Rout Chhatravas’, in memory of a twelve-year-old boy, Baji Rout, who sacrificed his life by disallowing the British forces to cross the river Brahman by the boat. Thus his faith and strong determination served as an example for all of the children who pass through ‘Baji Rout Chhatravas’ or in other word, this spirit of sacrifice was an eternal message for the children of ‘Baji Rout Chhatravas’. It was an institution of national importance, registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 (www.bacangul.org historyBRC.html)
This ‘Baji Rout Chhatravas’ was originally established to provide residential facilities and educational opportunities for children of freedom fighters. But later on, it was expanded to provide educational facilities and educational opportunities to the children belonging to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward classes along with underprivileged sections of society coming from all over Orissa (www.orissa.society.org/souvenir/souvenir2004.pdf).

At Baji Rout Chhatravas, both Nabakrushna Choudhury and Malati Choudhury led a Gandhian way of life, to serve people in need, and to live in equality. They put their ideas and way of life into practice. Being inspired by the educational philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, Smt. Malati Choudhury, Nabakrushna Choudhury and their dedicated team introduced an innovative pattern of education, called ‘Nai Talim’, in Baji Rout Chhatravas. In the system of ‘Nai Talim’ which was popularly known as ‘Basic Education’, Gandhiji advocated on the complete development of the children through the use of one’s body, mind and spirit, or in other words, the union of his hand, heart and intellect, in which emphasis was given on art, craft and manual work.

Rabindranath Tagore’s emphasis on education, as it creates the complete harmony between creator (nature) and its creation (man). When a child learns agricultural work scientifically, he uses his hand, heart and intellect and also becomes close to nature. Therefore, in ‘Baji Rout Chhatravas’ much importance was given towards the developing the aesthetic sensibilities of a child, so that, he grows as a self-reliant and non-violent human being (www.brcangul.org/history/BRC.htm).
At first, those boys and girls who had joined in the Baji Rout Chhatravas were Nityananda, Sabi, Chakra and Laxmi, afterwards Sunafulla Gurubari, Ratnakar, Sula, Khula, Golak, Sabi, Maheswar, Babaa and Mera etc joined there at Anugul. In 11th May 1949, teaching was started at the Chhtravas, comprising of 15 children of different age group. Uttara, Parbati and Kiran taught there, how to clean their dresses and take care of the skin to avoid skin diseases. Rusi Behera who was undergoing elementary / basic education training earlier became Head Master. Dibakar Pradhan, Uttar Parbati and Kiranalikha engaged themselves in teaching. Though, by name it was a Chhatravas or a student hostel, but in reality, it functioned as a residential school. One has to look after all other activities of day to day life along with learning. There was no definite time schedule for teaching. Children were trained in day to day work along with dancing and singing.

Baji Rout Chhatravas was the simplest possible habitat for Nabakrushna Choudhury and Malati Choudhury, where they lived throughout their life in free India and from where they launched many struggle for justice, the mud-walled thatched house, where they lived and breathed their last remains today as the place of pilgrimage for many (Nayak 2010).

The ‘Utkal Navajeevan Mandal’ was a voluntary organization of repute, engaged in rural development and tribal welfare in the rural and tribal areas of Orissa. It was a sister organisation, situated in the campus adjacent to that of Baji Rout Chhatravas. Its workers had been instrumental in bringing children to the Chhatravas from the tribal areas of Orissa. Malati Choudhury, the wife of Nabakrushna Choudhury was determined to highlight the plight of the tribal people and fought to liberate them.
from the exploitation and harassment by money-lenders, landlords and forest officials. She worked in the dense forest area of Ganjam, Plulbanî and Koraput districts, fighting for their rights. Thus, under her (Malati Choudhury) sincere efforts, the ‘Utkal Navajeena Mandal’ was established in 1948, at Angul, Orissa, with an aim and objective of the tribal areas development throughout Orissa (www.orissa.society.org/souvenirs/souvenirs.2004.pdf).

Kujendri became the center of activities such as spinning, weaving, adult education, prohibition. At Angul, Malati Choudhury, with the support of Nabakrushna Choudhury had started a programme for educating women and training them for various constructive activities in rural areas and also for their own development. The women, those were trained at Angul (Utkal Navajevan Mandal), became stalwarts of opposition to continuing oppression in tribal areas of Orissa (www.orissa.society.org/souvenirs/souvenirs.2004.pdf).

‘Utkal Navajeevan Mandal’ was established in 1948 by the veteran freedom fighters and sarvodaya leaders like Gopabandhu Choudhury, Nabakrushna Choudhury, Krupasindhu Hota, Rama Devi and Malati Choudhury. It had worked with a view to the upliftment of the poor and undeveloped sections of the society particularly belonging to the tribal areas of Orissa. Late Sarangadhar Das was the first president and Sri Gopabandhu Choudhury was its first secretary while Smt Malati Choudhury was its first treasurer. One women welfare training center was functioning at Angul under the supervision of this organization to train women in midwife along with some handicraft. Students who have passed from this institute are adjusted as sevikas for social works in tribal areas. This organization has also
taken up child development programmes, rural development programmes and management of NCLP (National Child Labour Project) Schools (angul nic in/chap-21htm)

**NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY AS A TEACHER**

After coming out of power, Nabakrushna Choudhury spent most of his time for the welfare of the society. Imparting education was one of the important contributions which he had made, towards the society. He was a man of action and very famous as a revolutionary dedicated teacher. Teaching was his passion. He had influenced other teachers in his ideology. He not only taught great things, but also practiced, what he preached as a teacher. Though Nabakrushna Choudhury got less time in direct teaching in classes but, his enthusiasm for education was so deep that, he performed the job of teaching very honestly. He was the first teacher at ‘Alakaashram’, which was established by Gopabandhu Choudhury (elder brother of Nabakrushna Choudhury) on the bank of river Alaka. The teaching environment of that Ashram was totally different from the normal school. In the later period, of 1974, Nabakrushna Choudhury further started teaching at ‘Jivan Bidyalaya’ at Champatimunda, in Anugul to give new lease of life to his dream institution. Sri Prafulla Senapati, one of the famous teachers of that time vividly described the magic of Nabakrushna Choudhury’s teaching that, he personally shown interest towards his teachings even during his own classes as a teacher (Nayak 2001 257).

During his tenure as the chief minister of Orissa, he tried his best for the spread of elementary education system and to remove the shortage of trained teacher in the said educational system. He had established the colleges for imparting training in elementary education in Orissa. It was a unique training system in India.
In spite of government initiative, elementary education made less progress. The importance and need of such educational system were not properly understood by the guardians of that time. In other way, the trained high official, through Macaulay’s Education System, considered it as a challenge. Education based on physical training envisages that, education related to physical training also included cleaning of the surrounding and even toilets. Even students were advised there, to involve themselves in physical activities in order to remain fit and healthy. But students belonging from rich upper caste or rich families did not appreciate such type of physical activities in the education. Because, with such system adopted in the schools, aristocrats and rich boys would have to face a lot of difficulties in comparison to the students belonging from the common family, who would remain in forefront in such a system, in those time. The students were few, and who ever passed the school, easily got appointment. For maintaining livelihoods with such education, was not a problem then. The guardians of rich class students were not interested to send their children to such institution based on physical work along with education as its hurt their ego in the society, because, their children had to do the work, starting from cleaning toilet to other works based on physical labours, which the students from rich and aristocratic families did not appreciate. Moreover after initial educatın in elementary school, no further facilities were available for continuing higher studies in college.

In spite of such situation, Nabakrushna Choudhury with the help and co-operation of Malati Choudhury had established an elementary school at Champatimunda, close to Anugul. Nabakrushna Choudhury was interested to transform it into an ideal “Uttar Moulika Bidyalaya”. He had arranged required
gadgets, instruments and facilities to start elementary basic science education there (Mohanty 1994)

How much he was interested for the growth of elementary school, was clearly known from a letter written to Karunakar Parida on 2nd June 1948, as under -

“You can achieve very big things in your life, if you accept and learn moulika shikshya The future of India is depending very much on the success of this educational system Many great scientists and engineers are there, in the country and will be there But the art and science of creating good and humble man is the need of the hour, for the country as well as for the world” (Nayak 2001)

As, he had spent more time in Bhoodan movement, in activities of shantisena and also took active participation in the agitational programme of “Congress Hatao” frequently, he was not able to manage the school at Champatimunda successfully His opposition to the government action of suppressive measures in naxal affected areas, and giving more time for that, stood obstacles in innovative application of new system of education, started at Champatimunda In spite of all these difficulties, he along with Malati Choudhury in 1974, stayed at Champatimunda and tried their best to convert it into a pioneer institution, in the field of elementary education This institution had attracted many revolutionary leaders like Rabindranath Sahoo etc

As a teacher Nabakrushna Choudhury believed that education based on physical training system was very beneficial in real life It was backed by revolutionary ideas It was not even felt by the educated persons They thought that in elementary
education, the children have to make thread, weave cloth, cultivate the land and clean the toilet etc. In their opinion, student educated in such system would not be doctors, engineers and deputy magistrates. At present age, 95% of the students coming out of the so called colleges and universities developed like mushroom, to be selected in above lucrative posts is unthinkable and even they can not earn 500 rupees per month. But on the other hand, good carpenters, electrical mechanics, masonry engaged in construction of house and vehicle driver etc. can able to earn much better. Elementary education through physical training would have been produced more efficient doctors, engineers, administrative officers, bank employees who could have served better to the need of lower section of the society. This could have removed their negative attitude towards physical labour and common people. Further such educated person would not have claimed salary that is 100 times more than the common people. After completing primary and middle level education at school of villages and towns, they could have moved to anywhere for higher education. In contrary to the present educational system, that was only producing useless, wayward young boys and girls. Some people now realized the matter and trying to educate the boys and girls through physical work and training, under new system of education, with a purpose of getting effective engagement after completion of the study. But those who were during their study period mostly spend under the shadow, without physical labour and training would be unsuitable when they undergo training in their later part of the career.

Nabakrushna Choudhury was not only aware of Gandhiji’s philosophy of education, but also aware of thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore and Aurobindo Ghosh. He was also very much excited relating to the revolutionary change in educational
system in later years M A Wahid, one of the teachers of that time, who taught for some times at Champatimunda on his request, was overwhelmed knowing Nabakrushna’s philosophy of education. He had supplied him books to read, named ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’, ‘Cultural Revolution in China’ and other books. By going through these books, Wahim’s thinkings in education had totally changed. According to Wahid, Nabakrushna Choudhury was one among the top three educationalists of Asia by that time. The books written by world’s top thinkers and research scholars were kept in his library. He also provided him a book known as “Learning to Be” which was very useful in understanding life. For Nabakrushna Choudhury, school was world and education was life’s long activity. His teaching/understanding life can not be confined within the periphery of Champatimunda and Alakashram as teacher (Nayak 2001 257-62).

CONGRESS–HATAO MOVEMENT

In 1967, Nabakrushna Choudhury was associated with “Congress-Hatao” movement in the state. However, he did not contest in the election to state legislative assembly held in 1967. He, as per the advice of Vinobhajee in 1965, was staying at a peace centre in Nagaland. There, he wrote a letter to prominent teacher of that time, Sri Karunakar Parida. In that letter, he ventilated his anguish and disgust about the congress misrule. He wrote, “Whole life was based upon many imaginations and ideas. He was thinking on himself for pursuing and galvanizing for the cause of great revolution for the country. Now from the present status it is felt that the revolution is far away from achievement, rather it has failed badly. Out of anger my
heart and mind has been smashed to ashes.” Thus in the general election of 1967, Nabakrushna Choudhury propagated against congress party. He openly declared that, he was not propagating in favour of any party, but surely doing it against congress. So, he was prepared to accept the offer to plead in in favour of other party, if invited. He was then, actively participated in the “Congrass Hatao Campaign” by prominent socialist leader Ram Manahar Lohia. It was proved when the result of the election was coming out, the people of the country were very much agitated against the congress party after the demise of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In that election, the congress became minority in seven congress ruled states. Nabakrushna expressed his satisfaction in such changed scenario (Mohanty 1994 63).

NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY AND NATIONAL EMERGENCY

By 1974, there was corruption everywhere in the country. Those belonging to government services were earning huge amounts of money by unfair means. Common people were suffering most. Jayaprakash Narayan voiced his displeasure and opposition to this sort of corruption which had entered the body politics. He appealed to the young people to fight against the government and overthrow it. This was too much to be swallowed by the then prime minister Smt Indira Gandhi. She declared national emergency in the country in 1975.

During the emergency days, Nabakrushna Choudhury, Malati Choudhury and other leaders were imprisoned. He was sent to Baripada jail and Malati Choudhury to Cuttack jail. There, he became sick in Baripada Jail. He was not able to tolerate the solitary confinement, and developed partial paralysis. At his age, that was too
much for him. Even then, he was enquiring about the people and their condition. His family members were very much disturbed and asked him to keep out of politics. He told them by a meaningful smile, “People are my life.” When he was feeling slightly better, was released on parole. The doctors put some restrictions on his movements. Malatī Choudhury was also released from Cuttack jail. Both of them returned to Angul.

All over the country, there was expression of resistance to emergency. This was a sub-surface activity.

Nabakrushna Choudhury’s life was a living example of breaking meaningless and superstitious rituals and conventions. His actions, in these areas did not exclude his family circles. He had lifelong interest in children and the youth (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabakrushna_Chandhuri).

NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY AND GANDHI VIDYA INSTITUTION

Loknayak Jaya Prakash Narayan established Gandhi Vidya Institution in the year 1960 at Kashi to attract youngsters towards Gandhi’s thought and ideals. He offered the responsibility to manage this institution to his old friend Nabakrushna Choudhury. He studied there a book printed by Bharat Sarkar (Government of India) named “Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi” and also collected many writings of Mahatma Gandhi, made notes in his personal file as known from his letter which he wrote to one of his relatives in 1975, from Baripada jail (Mohanty 1994 62).
NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY WORKS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE DURING DISTURBANCES

In 1974, there was communal clashes and killing at Rourkela. At that time, Nabakrushna Choudhury was very much worried for the incidence and he reached there along with volunteers, established contact with disturbing elements and stayed there till peace was retuned. Till today, people of Rourkela, remembered him for his contribution for establishing peace there. During that year, communal disturbances based on language was took serious proportion in Assam between Bengalis and Assamese (Mohanty 1994:62).

Today's Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan till 1971. It was known as East Pakistan. In the name of religion, some persons of doubtful character were torturing the Hindus, who were migrating to India. Some of them came to live in Orissa. This was enough for the Hindus. To take revenge, they attacked the Muslims. It had its repercussions in Orissa. Rourkela saw killing of Hindus and Muslims. The entire country was worried. Nababakrushna Choudhury, Rama Devi, Malati Devi and others rushed to Rourkela in order to understand the situation and tried their best to do something which were beneficial in the way of establishing peace. They worked among both the communities till the situation became calm (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabakrushna_Choudhury).

In the year 1965, Vinovaji sent Nabakrushna Choudhury to Nagaland for maintenance of peace through negotiation and understanding for peaceful coexistence. By that time, the Nagas were considered violent tribe by nature.
Government employees and outsiders were killed by Nagas. At that time the Nagas were organizing themselves to be separated from India. There was violence and bloodshed. Even military intervention by government could not stop the Nagas. Nabakrushna Choudhury went there with Jayaprakash Narayan. For that reason, no one was interested to go there and talk to them. During such dangerous situation, he dared to venture Nagaland and met and talked to the nagas at their homes. He tried his best to understand them through contacts as they were very apprehensive and doubtful towards other (Mohanty 1994: 62).

Through the establishment of an institution named ‘Peace Centre’ at Mokakchung, they were talking with the people, for amicable solution of their problems. After Jayaprakash, Nabakrushna Choudhury became the director of the peace centre, the Nagas stopped their hostile activities (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabakrushna_Choudhury).

DIPLOMATIC ROLE OF SHRI NABAKRUSHNA CHOUDHURY

In 1959, Nabakrushna Choudhury and Mrs. Mridula Sarabhai, who were among the handful of eminent nationalists who never held a paid political office after independence, for personal gain. From 1953, until her death in cancer in 1974, she espoused the cause of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, the then prime minister of Jammu and Kashmir, who was arrested by the Indian government on charges of treason.

Mridula Sarabhai who worked as principal negotiators for Kashmir Affairs and used to visit Anugul for consultation with Nabakrushna Choudhury. Many Kashmiri leaders used to visit Anugul for consultations with Sri Choudhury in Baji.
Rout Chhatrabas at Anugul Around June 1959, Nabakrushna Choudhury went to Srinagar and stayed there for quite sometime for amicable solution of Kashmir issue. This was a top level diplomatic mission. He used to interact with top political leaders and military officers, (at that time Major General H Singh, who was the liaison officer). (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabakrushna_Chandhury)
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